

“WHO THEN IS THE FAITHFUL AND WISE MANAGER?”

A Biblical Vision for Financial Stewardship

Presenter: Joseph Elliotson

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LAST WEEK...

What are tithes? Are they required?

- Tithes are defined in the OT law: Levitical tithe, Priestly tithe, Festival tithe, Charity tithe
- NT is virtually silent on tithes
- Levitical and Priestly tithes are connected with the old covenant priesthood which was made obsolete by Christ's new covenant
- “For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.” (Heb 7:12)
- Counterarguments generally relate to the old covenant

PART III

What Should New Covenant
Giving Look Like?

GIVING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Danger of an Incomplete Conclusion

- “Tithes are not important” can subconsciously and accidentally be equated with “giving is not important”
- It’s essential to transition a perspective of givings from the OT to the NT
- Instructions and illustrations of giving in the NT are pervasive (seen in sessions 2-3)

GIVING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

New Covenant Giving

1. Key principles of new covenant giving
2. To whom to give?
3. How much to give?
4. Practical approach to NT giving

GIVING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. Key Principles of NT Giving

- Very important to get the right “feel” for NT giving!
 - Motivation for giving
 - Purpose for giving
 - Extent of giving

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Good Motivations

- Freely chosen “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion” (2 Cor 9:7)
 - “Take from among you a contribution to the Lord. Whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the Lord's contribution... And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him, and brought the Lord's contribution” (Ex 35:5,21)
- Cheerful “God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor 9:7)

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Good Motivations

- Genuine love for others
 - “If I give away all I have...but have not love, I gain nothing.” (1 Cor 13:3)
 - “6 Accordingly, we urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace... 8 I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine.” (2 Cor 8:6,8)

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Good Motivations

- From faith in what God says
 - “By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain...God commending him by accepting his gifts.” (Heb 11:4)
 - “If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” (Jas 2:15-16)
 - “Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed.” (Prb 19:17)

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Bad Motivations

- Personal praise
 - “6 Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. 2 Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Mt 6:1-4)

GIVING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Bad Motivations

- To be paid back by people
 - “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. 13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.” (Lk 14:12-14)
- It is an all too common motive to do something good because of the earthly payback.

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Purpose

- To supply needs
 - “your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need” (2 Cor 8:13-14).
 - “Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.” (Lk 12:33)
 - “When you give a dinner or a banquet...” (Lk 14:12-14)

GIVING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Vision	Purpose of Finances
1. Parable of the Talents	Use God's resources to care for the needs of Jesus' "brothers"
2. Wise & Faithful Manager	Manage God's resources to provide for the needs of God's "household" instead of personal indulgence
3. Treasure in Heaven	Faithfully steward God's treasure to care for the needy; God will entrust much more in heaven for the same purpose
4. Fairness/Equality	God distributes wealth unevenly so that we can redistribute it fairly
5. God's Greatest Decrees	Through love serve one another, as you would have them through love serve you
6. Greatest in the Kingdom	The greatest in the kingdom is servant of all
7. Distinctively Christian Love	Serve your household specially, to nurture them to love their enemies with Christ

GIVING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Purpose

- Thanksgiving and glory to God
 - “¹¹ You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. ¹² For the ministry of this service is not only *supplying the needs of the saints* but is also overflowing in *many thanksgivings to God.*” (2 Cor 9:11-12)
 - “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Mt 5:16)

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Extent

- There is no specific quantitative guidance in the NT
- According to ability
 - “For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have.” (2 Cor 8:12)
 - “The disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.” (Acts 11:29)
 - “According to their ability they gave to the treasury of the work...” (Ezra 2:69)

GIVING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Extent

- Fairly, with the good of the whole at heart
 - “13 For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness 14 your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. 15 As it is written, ‘Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.’” (2 Cor 8:13-15)
 - “44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.” (Acts 2:44-45)

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Extent

- Generously “be generous and ready to share” (1 Tm 6:18)
- Trend towards sacrificial giving
 - “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.” (2 Cor 8:9)
- The love of the indwelling Spirit of Christ willingly accepts an imbalance of personal needs in order to seek the well-being of another.

GIVING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Extent

- “1 Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, 2 and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. 3 And he said, “Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. 4 For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.” (Lk 21:1-4)

GIVING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

2. To whom to give?

- To anyone who needs it
 - “Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens...” (Lk 12:33)
 - “But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?” (1 Jn 3:17-18)
 - “And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds *to all, as any had need.*” (Acts 2:45)

GIVING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

2. To whom to give?

- Example of the Charity Tithe

- “28 “At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. 29 And the *Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow*, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.” (Dt 14:28-29)

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2. To whom to give?

- The “especially” principle
 - “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” (Gal 6:10)
 - “But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” (1 Tm 5:8)
- God wants us to love (“do good” and “provide”) anyone
- God wants us to have special favour towards our “household”

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2. To whom to give?

- What makes Christian love distinctive?
 - “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?” (Mt 5:46)
 - “43 You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Mt 5:43-45)

GIVING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

What does the Bible say about giving to the church?

- Some teach that tithes ought to go to the church; what does the NT say?
- Common ministries within of a church:
 - a) Pastoral care and preaching/teaching
 - b) Support of missionaries and missions work
 - c) Charity and relief
 - d) Facilities

GIVING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

a) What about giving to support pastors?

- “the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel” (1 Cor 9:14)
- Jesus: “the laborer deserves his wages...whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you” (Lk 10:7-8)
- Paul: “17 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.” (1 Tm 5:17-18)

GIVING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

a) What about giving to support pastors?

- “Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.” (Gal 6:6)
- “If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?” (1 Cor 9:11)

The overarching spirit is to share from our abundance to meet the needs of others who have shared from their abundance to meet ours.

- “Freely you have received; freely give.” (Mt 10:8, NIV)
- Paul’s example: “nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it.” (2 Thess 3:8)

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d) What about giving to support facilities?

- OT facility was the temple, the “house of God”
 - “We will not neglect the house of our God.” (Neh 10:39)
- In the NT there was no facility (besides the temple) since the believers met in homes
 - “And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts” (Acts 2:46)
 - “Give my greetings... to Nympha and the church in her house.” (Col 4:15)

GIVING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

What does the Bible say about giving to the church?

- Is it good to give to the church?
 - Yes, it is fitting and appropriate to freely share to bless those who have freely shared their gifts to bless us.
 - “Freely you have received; freely give.” (Mt 10:8, NIV)
This is how the kingdom of heaven operates!
- Is it a duty to give to the church?
 - “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Cor 9:7)
- Does the Bible present an attitude on this for the church? Does this clarify the ‘duty’ question?

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What should be the church's attitude toward givings?

- Paul was an apostle supported by believers
 - “10 I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. 11 *Not that I am speaking of being in need*, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content... 14 Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble... 16 Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. 17 *Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.*” (Php 4:10-17)

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What should be the church's attitude toward givings?

- What does Paul mean by “the fruit that increases to your credit” (Php 4:10-17)
- “the fruit of the Spirit is love” (Gal 5:22)
- “If I give away all I have... but have not love, I gain nothing.” (1 Cor 13:3)

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What should be the church's attitude toward givings?

- For this reason Paul gave up his right to reward
 - “*Do we not have the right* to eat and drink? ...Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? ... Nevertheless, *we have not made use of this right*, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.” (1 Cor 9:4,6,7,12)
 - “And I will not be a burden, for *I seek not what is yours but you*. For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. *15 I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls.*” (2 Cor 12:14-16)

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Summary on church givings:

In the kingdom:

- **Church shepherds** seek to nurture the spiritual fruitfulness of the church family through a Spirit-inspired culture of love and liberty that eliminates any influence toward duty and compulsion to give.
- The **church family** seeks, out of love, to care for the well-being and provision of the same shepherds who seek daily to care for the spiritual well-being and provision of the church family.

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3. How much to give?

- There is no specific quantitative guidance in the NT
- Extent of giving:
 - According to ability
 - Fairly, with the good of the whole at heart
 - Generously
 - Trend towards sacrificial giving
- Fixed amounts and fixed percentages don't apply

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3. How much to give?

- So how do we decide? Does it have to be so vague?
- Does Jesus say we have to give until we're poor and penniless?
 - “Jesus said to him, ‘If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.’” (Mt 19:21, see also Mk 10:21 and Lk 18:22)
 - “Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.” (Lk 12:33)

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4. Practical approach to giving

- Consider the implication of 2 Cor 8:15 “Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.”
 - God gives more to some and less to others so that His people can distribute it on His behalf.
 - In this way each one has just enough for his needs; no shortfall and no waste.
 - This suggests the significance of defining our needs, to distinguish between the portion God gave us for our use and the portion that God gave us for the use of others.

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4. Practical approach to giving

- Randy Alcorn:

- “The Christian community should be filled with people who set a cap on their lifestyles, giving away everything above that amount. We need to draw a line and stop accumulating beyond it. Give away everything else. That isn’t even sacrificial giving, it’s just giving according to our ability.”

“For the Fame of God's Name: Essays in Honor of John Piper”, chapter 16, page 325

- There is no reason for a correlation between lifestyle and income.

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4. Practical approach to giving

- The “William Carey Wildcard”

- “In October 1795, William Carey received a packet of letters in India. One of the letters criticized Carey for "engaging in affairs of trade" instead of devoting full time to his missionary work. Carey was hurt and angered by the accusation. If he had not worked, he and his family would have starved since the support from England was so slow and small and sporadic in arriving.”

John Piper, DesiringGod.com, sermon “*Loved Flock, Do Not Be Afraid to Give It Away*”

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4. Practical approach to giving

- The “William Carey Wildcard”

- “It is a constant maxim with me that, if my conduct will not vindicate itself, it is not worth vindicating . . . I only say that, after my family's obtaining a bare allowance, my whole income, and some months, much more, goes for the purposes of the gospel, in supporting persons to assist in the translation of the Bible, write copies, teach school, and the like . . . I mention . . . [this] to show that the love of money has not prompted me to pursue the plan that I have engaged in. I am indeed poor, and shall always be so till the Bible is published in Bengali and Hindosthani, and the people want no further instruction.”

(Mary Drewery, William Carey: A Biography, p. 91)

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4. Practical approach to giving

- The “William Carey Wildcard”
 - John Piper: “After an allowance for me and my family, my whole income goes for the purposes of the gospel.’ That's the William Carey Wildcard. And I believe that's the call of Jesus to all his disciples.”

John Piper, DesiringGod.com, sermon “*Loved Flock, Do Not Be Afraid to Give It Away*”

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4. Practical approach to giving

- Randy Alcorn, “Money, Possessions & Eternity”
 - “The Owner, God, has put each of our names on his account. We have unrestricted access to it, a privilege that is subject to abuse. As his money managers, God trusts us to set our own salaries. We draw needed funds from his wealth to pay our living expenses. One of our central spiritual decisions is determining what’s a reasonable amount to live on. Whatever that amount is—and it will legitimately vary from person to person—we shouldn’t hoard or waste the excess. After all, it’s his, not ours. And he has something to say about where to put it.”

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4. Practical approach summary:

1. Quantitatively define needs and lifestyle (budgeting)
 - This will legitimately vary from person to person.
2. Choose a financial limit for your lifestyle that:
 - you have decided in your heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion; and
 - is unrelated to income.
3. Calculate the difference between income and lifestyle limit as “abundance” for purposes of giving
4. Can allocate regular and spontaneous giving toward needs that “move your spirit”.

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Questions?
Comments?